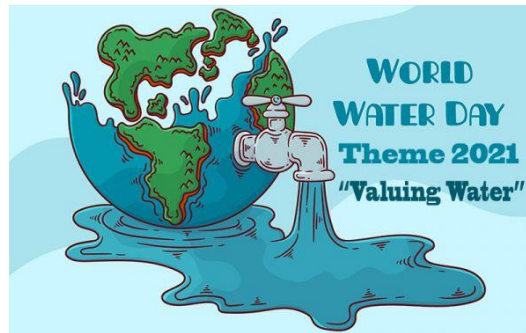


March 22, 2021: World Water Day



The World Water Day is celebrated to raise awareness on the global water crisis, and to support the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: “water and sanitation for all by 2030”.

Space, air, fire, water, earth are the five gross elements (mahabhuta) in the creation process as per the Vedic (Hindu) philosophy. **Water is life life-sustaining**: Human life is aquatic during the 9 months gestation period; The diet of a human baby is liquid for some six months after birth; Saliva, digestive juices, hormonal secretions, blood, etc. are all watery substances enabling the assimilation of nutrients, delivery of oxygen, nutrients, and remove the toxins from our body cells.

An essential component in daily life, **water has a complex inestimable value across the different cultures in the world**. It is essential to agriculture, food production and to the ecological balance of our planet, Earth - also called the “Water Planet” as 70% of its surface is covered with water. The human body is 70% water. Present-day scientific Re-search is continuously adding ample evidence upholding the edicts of the scriptures about water being a vital element that sustains life.

Water in the Vedas

- ◆ Hymns 7.49.1-4 of the RigVeda (RV) describe the water cycle (evaporation-condensation-clouds-rainfall-rivers, lakes & sea). **It calls on all to live in harmony with nature, respect water as the source of life that sustains and protects life on earth, hence the need to use water judiciously.**
- ◆ Hymns 10.09.1-9 (RV) expounds on the value of water to life. It is cool and refreshing ...thirst quenching, rejuvenating. It is essential to the production of food crops, medicinal herbs, etc. for wellness. **Water is thus equated to the mother, physician, protector, and source of material and spiritual treasures.**
- ◆ Hymns 10.39.1-15 (RV) upholds Yajna (*agnihotra, havan*) as an environmental cleansing process whereby through combustion, evaporation and sublimation the essential oils in the oblations of ghee (clarified butter) and samagrī (mixture of medicinal herbs, fragrant and sweet substances) disperse into the air micro particles. **The vapors from the havan kund (firepot) mix up with the water vapor in the atmosphere, add up to the clouds and precipitate as highly beneficial rain.** These hymns also unfold the science of wellness; **the use of water to extract the essence from medicinal herbs and to prepare sattvic food and beverages that, along with nourishing the body, promote balance, harmony, goodness, purity of mind-body-spirit, vital creative and constructive energies, and a luminous personality where positivity, serenity, mindfulness, peace, virtue, spiritual practice reigns supreme.**

- ◆ Hymn 22.29 of the YajurVeda (YV) highlights on **the need to maintain the purity of water.**
- ◆ “*Aapah shaantih*” in Hymn 36.17 (YV), the *Shaanti Paatha* (prayers for universal peace is an invocation that the waters (clouds, rains, vapors, rivers, lakes, seas, oceans...) be peaceful to us. **We need to first be peaceful to the waters, to receive their unfailing protection and be blessed with a healthy life.**

Learning from water: a prominent element during Vedic (Hindu) rituals.

1. *Cleaning of the sites of worship (rooms, temples...), bath and ablutions*

Along with the physical cleansing, water is a perpetual reminder to us to (1) shed off the dirt out from mind and heart (centers of mental and emotional activities); (2) be ever watchful of our foods and drinks (*āhār*), our thoughts (*vichār*), and our conduct (*vyavahār*); (3) toss out duplicity in our life and keep no skeletons in the cupboards – total harmony in public and private life with no hidden facets in a so-called ‘private’ life; and (4) align our thoughts (*manasā*), speech (*vāchā*) and physical actions (*karmanā*) on the path of righteous living (dharma).

2. *Āchamana (sipping of water) & Anga sparsha (touching of various parts of our body with water)*

Water is reckoned as

- ***Cool and refreshing:*** it quenches our thirst.
- ***Purifying:*** Water is extensively used as a cleansing agent – bath, laundry, etc.;
- ***Transforming:*** Boiled rice, cooked bread cannot be reversed to the original state.
- ***Bonding:*** Cement and other aggregates in the construction industry. Water from two vessels mixed in a third one cannot be segregated back.
- ***Peaceful:*** Ripples arise when a stone is thrown in a pond, but after a while the surface becomes calm.

Water teaches Humility: When ego is in bloom, and the feeling of being indispensable is riding high, that our departure would leave an unfillable hole ...Take a bucket and fill it with water; put one hand in it up to the wrist; pull it out and the hole that's remaining ...is a measure of how much we'll be missed.

Our materialistic age has led to a loss of the ability to sense the subtle energy that transcended through various cultures and generations. Water was a sacred substance used for purification, healing, revitalizing and regenerating: holy water sprinkled during blessings and other healing springs.

Next time when we open a tap or take a glass of water, let's be more mindful of the teachings of this precious liquid. Let's pledge to

- **be as cool and refreshing as water in sustaining the environment; and**
- **as pure and peaceful beings to put up 100% physical and mental efforts to transform ourselves to be better human beings, for a better circle of relatives and friends, a better community, a better country and a better world.**

Acharya Bramdeo Mokoonlall

March 22, 2021